

REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-11 are pending. No new matter has been added by way of the present amendments. For instance, the specification has been amended to correct inadvertent typographical errors. Additionally, the format of the claims has been amended to more clearly recite the present invention. These amendments are non-narrowing in nature. Further, claim 1 has been amended to recite subject matter taken from claim 6. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to reflect that in the drying process of the adhesive agent wherein the fiber mat impregnated with the thermosetting agent is dried in an atmosphere of 120°C or less, while an inner portion of the fiber mat is sucked from one side thereof. Accordingly, no new matter has been added.

In view of the following remarks, Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner withdraw all rejections and allow the currently pending claims.

Issues Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 1-6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ueda (JP 2002-283313) in view of Stover and Kawai. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Ueda discloses the preparation of a fiber board which is supplied with an adhesive. The fiber board is then dried at a specified temperature. Ignoring other potential distinctions, Applicants point out that Ueda simply discloses drying by air-blowing. Ueda fails to suggest or disclose that during the drying process, the inside of the fiber mat is sucked from one side thereof. As explained in the present specification at page 19, lines 1-15, such a drying process can be conducted in a state wherein the temperature difference in the thickness direction within the fiber mat is small. Accordingly, the thermosetting heating agent can be uniformly distributed within the fiber mat and a fiber board having increased mechanical properties, peel strength and water resistance results.

Thus, Ueda fails to suggest or disclose carrying out the drying process while the inside of the fiber mat is sucked from one side thereof. Further, the secondary references of Stover and Kawai further fail to suggest or disclose the subject matter. Accordingly, all of the references cited by the Examiner, whether taken alone or in combination, fail to suggest or disclose the currently claimed subject matter. The Examiner has therefore failed to present a valid *prima facie* case of obviousness. Reconsideration and withdrawal thereof are respectfully requested.

The Examiner has also rejected claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ueda in view of Stover, Kawai and Simonson. Further, the Examiner has rejected claims 8 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ueda in view Stover, Kawai and Seale. Further, the Examiner has rejected claim 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ueda in view of Stover, Kawai, Seale and Onishi. Lastly, the Examiner has rejected claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Ueda in view of Stover, Kawai and Betzner. Applicants respectfully traverse each of these rejections.

As discussed above, the references of Ueda, Stover and Kawai fail to suggest or disclose carrying out the drying process while the inside of the fiber mat is sucked from one side thereof. The additional secondary references cited by the Examiner in the above rejections also fail to suggest or disclose this limitation. Thus, each of the above rejections is overcome for the same reasons as the rejection of claims 1-6 being overcome above. Reconsideration and withdrawal of these rejections are respectfully requested.

In summary, Applicants respectfully submit that all the cited art presented by the Examiner, whether taken alone or in combination, fails to suggest or disclose the currently claimed subject matter. In particular, Applicants have distinguished the

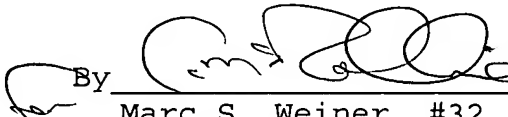
present invention from the cited art of Ueda, Stover, Kawai, Simonson, Seale, Onishi and Betzner. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw all rejections and allow the currently pending claims.

If the Examiner has any questions or comments, please contact Craig A. McRobbie, Reg. No. 42,874 at the offices of Birch, Stewart, Kolasch & Birch, LLP.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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